

Mothers' Day is a time for sons, daughters, husbands and grandchildren to reflect upon and celebrate all the wonderful contributions our mothers have made. This holiday also calls us to ensure that mothers are provided with the tools and resources that will help them raise healthy children.

Certainly, a child's health is one of the most important priorities for mothers, but with the rising cost of health care, many working parents are finding themselves priced out of even the most basic services for them and their children. This Mother's Day, what better way to honor the spirit of motherhood than to make sure all children have access to health care services, including regular check-ups or doctors' visits when they are ill?



The first action that Congress can take is to reauthorize and fund the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), a block grant to states that allows them to cover uninsured children who are not eligible for Medicaid but whose family incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty line. In the ten years since SCHIP was created, a number of states have extended coverage to uninsured children. Today, 40 states, including Maryland, cover children through Medicaid or SCHIP, compared to just three before SCHIP was enacted ten years ago.

Reauthorizing children's healthcare is a significant priority that both chambers of the 110th Congress have pledged to act on. In the House, we are working to pass a \$50 billion SCHIP enhancement bill that would ensure states have the resources they need to make sure that all children who are eligible are enrolled. With this funding, states would be able to serve one

million more eligible children and help more low-wage working parents remain self-sufficient.

In Maryland, that would mean 60,000 more children getting the medical coverage that they need. Our SCHIP legislation will also focus on improving access to dental care by improving reimbursement rates to dentists.

The House is also moving towards adding a \$396 million emergency fix to the 2007 SCHIP budget in order to help states – Maryland included – that find their children's health care services at risk because of insufficient funding provided under previous budgets.

One of the strongest measures of our values and priorities as a society is how well we take care of our most vulnerable citizens. That is why it is imperative to not only reauthorize and fund children's healthcare, but also to explore ways to expand coverage and ensure those who are eligible to enroll do so.

Maryland mothers can be sure that I will continue to do my part to fight for children's health care as well as other investments in the next generation. I am proud to have been named this year as one of Congress's Best Representatives for Children by the Children's Defense Fund Action Council (CDAFC). My 100 percent rating on the CDAFC 2006 Scorecard was awarded for my support of investments in children's education and health care and underscores my commitment to protecting the health and well-being of Maryland's children 100 percent of the time. Collectively, the Maryland Congressional Delegation ranked highly among states overall, placing sixth in the nation in its joint defense of children's interests.

This Mother's Day, we especially honor the love and sacrifices made by our mothers and the role they play in providing

for the health and well-being of our children. As a father of three wonderful daughters, two of whom are mothers, it is important to me that we ensure all mothers and caregivers have the resources to raise healthy children and have access to quality health care services.

All our mothers deserve our thanks and appreciation, not just on this Sunday in May, but every day. On this worthwhile and well-earned holiday, I would like to extend my gratitude to all Maryland moms for your hard work and sacrifice.